



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

DIVISION OF  
LEARNING SERVICES

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**Subject: Message #33: Bill of Rights Essay Contest**

**Date: February 2, 2016**

**To: [adecurriculum@lists.state.ar.us](mailto:adecurriculum@lists.state.ar.us)**

**From: Arkansas Department of Education Curriculum and Instruction Unit**

Dear Arkansas Curriculum Leaders:

ACLU of Arkansas is sponsoring a Bill of Rights Essay Contest for students in grades 7-12. Please read the following information and pass it along to teachers whose students may be interested in participating.

Deadline: Essays must be received by March 15, 2016.

Rules: Arkansas students in grades 7-12 are eligible. Essays must be no more than 750 words and should be typed. Essays will be judged on soundness of reasoning, clarity of writing and understanding of the subject matter, not viewpoint.

Prizes:

1st Place: **\$500**

2nd Place: **\$300**

3rd Place: **\$100**

Include: EACH essay MUST include: 1) complete name, 2) mailing address, 3) home phone, 4) grade, 5) school name, address and phone, and, if possible, 6) e-mail address. (Putting the information just on the outside of the envelope for several essays is not sufficient.)

ESSAY TOPIC: Value of the "Ban the box" movement. Should Arkansas employers avoid asking job applicants to divulge criminal history? Should such questions be forbidden by law?

Points that may be considered: Job applications in many locations include a box to check "yes"/"no" to indicate that the applicant has ever been arrested for a crime. Some categories of employers have voluntarily agreed to abstain from such questions on job applications, and the governments of some cities, counties, and states have passed laws to forbid such questions. Is criminal history a legitimate concern for employers? Should there be a distinction between asking about a criminal charge versus a criminal conviction? Should a distinction be made between misdemeanors and felonies? Is it more appropriate for some types of employment than for others? Does this sort of question on an application disproportionately impact classes of people who are explicitly protected by civil rights laws and court rulings?

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*Please share this information with others that might be interested. Thank you for serving the students of Arkansas.*

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Arkansas Department of Education  
Learning Services Division  
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(501) 682-7442





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COURT CASES AND OTHER RESOURCES

<http://www.littler.com/update-criminal-background-checks-impact-eeoc-v-freeman-and-ongoing-challenges-continuously-changing>

<http://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide/>

<http://www.bna.com/employer-concerns-liability-n17179893943/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disparate\\_impact](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disparate_impact)

Mail essays to:

ACLU Essay Contest

904 West Second Street, Suite One

Little Rock, AR 72201

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER, YOUR TEACHER'S NAME, THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER.

Winners will be announced by April 15, 2016. The winners' names will be made available to local and statewide newspapers, as well as radio and television stations. Call (501) 374-2660 if you have questions. Essays will not be returned, so be sure to keep a copy. Also, we unfortunately are not able to notify non-winners or acknowledge non-winning entries unless you provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard.

*Please share this information with others that might be interested. Thank you for serving the students of Arkansas.*

